DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 247 601 CS 208 544

AUTHOR	Wilucki, Belinda McCully
TITLE	The Impact of Teachers' Orientation to Literacy on Children's Developing Concepts of Written Language in Kindergarten.
SPONS AGENCY	National Council of Teachers of English, Urbana, Ill. Research Foundation.
PUB DATE	84
NOTE	99p.
PUB TYPE	Reports - Research/Technical (143)
EDRS PRICE	MF01/PC04 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	Comparative Analysis; *Concept Formation; *Ethnography; Grammar; Holistic Approach; Kindergarten; Language Acquisition; Learning Theories; *Literacy; Student Reaction; *Teacher Attitudes; Writing (Composition); Writing Instruction; Writing Readiness; *Writing Research
IDENTIFIERS	*Writing Development

ABSTRACT

Using such ethnographic techniques as interviews, classroom observations, and videotape recordings, a study explored the impact of two kindergarten teachers' theoretical orientations to literacy (whole language versus mechanics/skills) on children's developing concepts of writing. Data analysis revealed that children in a communication/whole language classroom wrote more and longer products than did children in a mechanics/skills classroom. Also, children in the communication/whole language classroom were allowed to choose their own topics, thus acquiring the notion that sharing a message was the goal for writing. Generally, the children in the mechanics/skills classroom wrote fewer, shorter pieces, many of which were copied from other sources. Students in this classroom generally listened to teacher instructions about letter shapes and sounds and directions for content and learned to write graphically conventional letters and words. Subjects in the communication/whole language classroom, however, learned to write their message the best they could with some assistance from others if necessary, and shared the message of their completed product with others. As opposed to the communication/whole language classroom where a wide range of writing behaviors were accepted and encouraged, the mechanics/skills classroom restricted the range of writing processes used by the students. Appended are the Analysis Guidelines and the questionnaires and interviews used in the study. (HOD)

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ED247601

The Impact of Teachers' Orientation to Literacy On Children's Developing Concepts of Written Language in Kindergarten

by

Belinda McCully Wilucki, Ph.D.

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National Council of Teachers of English

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1111 Kenyon Road

Urbana, Illinois 61801

1984

CS208544

The Impact of Teacher's Orientation to Literacy On Children's Developing Concepts of Written Language in Kindergarten

Director of Research	Belinda McCully Wilucki
Research Assistant	Shirley Crenshaw
Data Collection	Shirley Crenshaw Carol Gilles Becky Engley Patricia Jenkins Belinda McCully Wilucki
Data Analysis	Shirley Crenshaw Patricia Jenkins Belinda McCully Wilucki
Typist	Elaine Venters

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I wish to express my appreciation to the Columbia Missouri Public Schools, the administrators in this organization, and the many others who in one way or another assisted me in this project.

I am particularly grateful for the assistance of the two classroom teachers who participated in the research. They made valuable contributions to the project. Their time and efforts were appreciated.

My humble appreciation must go to the 18 delightful children who provided data for the research. They were special children and contributed to my unwavering enthusiasm on the topic of young language users.

I wish to express a very special acknowledgement to Shirley Crenshaw who served as research assistant on the project. Her interest, concern and support throughout the project have been invaluable to me.

I owe much to Dr. Patricia Jenkins who contributed her time and talents to the project. Her continuing consultation has been important to the research.

INTRODUCTION

Teachers of young children are aware of "scribbling", a process Kellogg (1970) described as children striving to depict the persons, places, objects and events in their environment. Children have also been observed to be actively involved in a "writing" process which contains unconventional features. Most educators have received such efforts with pleasure and enjoyment but usually without viewing the products as a form of written communication or language.

Research evidence suggests that young children can engage actively in the production of written language. Recent reports from scholars supporting a sociolinguistic theory of emerging written language compel us to recognize that very young children construct personally meaningful messages with symbols and signs available to them from their initial understandings of what print means and what it can do (Bissex 1980; Ferreiro 1982; Harste, Burke and Woodward 1981; King 1982; Read 1971). Read (1971) found children beginning to write as young as age three and one-half. He also noted that children spell according to their own perceptions of sound/symbol relationships, a phenomenon which has become known as "invented spelling". C. Chomsky (1976) described the same early writing behavior, thus supporting Read's work. She provided evidence which suggested that children four years of age write and exhibit knowledge of the phonological system of English language.

Bissex (1980) supported these findings and confirmed from her study that children do, in fact, write before entering school. According to DeFord (1980), children's attempts at written communication may include unconventional features; however, it is clear that their intent is to produce a message which has form, function and which is meaningful. These same writing behaviors are being noted in other countries Clay (1975, 1977) in New Zealand and Ferreiro (1982) in Mexico. Clay has described children's gradual development of a perceptual awareness of the traditional conventions used in written language. Ferreiro has postulated that the cognitive abilities of children (in the Piagetian sense) must be considered along with their linguistic abilities when determining the way in which they learn about the writing system.

Halliday(1973, p. iv) delineated the purposes for learning written language as parallel to the purposes for learning oral language:

> The impetus for reading and writing is a functional one, just as was the impetus for learning to speak and listen.... We learn to speak because we want to do things that we cannot do otherwise, and we learn to read and write for the same reason.

This sociolinguistic position indicates that we must not view the emergence of written language as secondary in nature. Rather, it is of primary importance in a child's "learning how to mean" (Halliday 1975). Halliday's position encourages us to view children as learning to use written language because it allows them to depict meaning to

themselves and others and to communicate with an audience in their environment.

The extent to which children are conscious of the functions of written language depends upon the information they receive from their social environment. The register (e.g. activities, role relationships and channels of communication) present in this environment may be reflected in the writing features used by young children. This suggests that teachers are an important factor affecting children's early use of print. An educator's notions about students, how they learn, and the nature of what is to be learned is directly related to their theoretical orientation to the learning process. Teacher's theoretical orientations to literacy, therefore, operate to establish expectancies, influence decisions within the school learning environment and subsequently its register (Halliday 1978). An investigation of existing programs suggests that theoretical orientations to written language govern transactions between teachers and students (Harste and Burke, 1976) and can be divided into two major categories: mechanic/skills and communication/whole language.

The long-term effects of the learning environment and its register and teachers' theoretical orientations to literacy on kindergarten children's development of a concept and productions of written language has not been explored. However, the implications are great for this type of research to improve instructional procedures and assist both teachers and language learners.

Statement of the Problem

Early childhood educators are becoming increasingly interested in the literacy development of kindergarten children. Writing is one component of literacy; however, the influence of the learning environments' register and the relationship of teachers' theoretical orientation to literacy on kindergarten children's development of a concept and productions of written language has not been completely explored. The questions raised for investigation in this study therefore, were:

1. Are teachers' stated beliefs as measured by the DeFord Theoretical Orientation to Reading Profile (TORP) consistent with practices in the classroom?
2. What specific characteristics of register (field, tenor, mode) appear to facilitate the development of written language?
3. What is the impact of varying theoretical orientations to literacy (communication/whole language or mechanics/skills) on writing strategy development?

Statement of the Research Purposes and Objectives

The purpose of this study was to examine, not evaluate, two differing instructional environments in literacy learning at the kindergarten level and the patterns of literacy learning displayed by children within them.

The following specific objectives for this research were stated:

1. To describe the theoretical orientation to literacy held by 2 kindergarten level teachers. The investigator determined the teachers' beliefs about writing and writing instruction.
2. To describe the characteristics of the kindergarten classroom's register. The investigator determined the
   a. field;
   b. tenor; and
   c. mode of the classrooms' learning environment.
3. To describe the concepts of written language held by 18 kindergarten children. The researcher determined the children's
   a. metalinguistic descriptions of written language;
   b. use of writing patterns; and
   c. use of writing conventions.

Significance of the Study

The significance of this study lies in the contribution to be made to the literature supporting an emerging theory of literacy which suggests that language develops in a social context as a result of a need to know, to understand and to communicate meaning. The learning environment present in the classroom is an important component of the context in which language develops. This longitudinal study of the register present in the classrooms of 18 kindergarten children allowed for a comprehensive description of the

demonstrated processes involved as children developed a concept of written language. The careful description of the learning environments present in the classrooms provided information related to what children already know about the written component of language when they first come to school and the continued development of their knowledge under the guidance of a teacher.

Information gained from this longitudinal, descriptive study provide insights into the following areas:

1. Understanding the magnitude of teachers' influence on children's development of writing strategies and concepts of written language;
2. The study of growth and change of writing and spelling;
3. Those aspects of the learning environments' register which facilitate written language production.

With such knowledge educators can formulate more appropriate curriculum guidelines, can develop acceptable classroom materials and can detail legitimate criteria for pupil evaluation in writing.

Definition of Terms

Register. Referred to the environmental determinants of the text or the social context. Register was characterized by three features: field, tenor and mode (Halliday, 1975).

Field. Referred to the nature of the activity and the subject matter involved in a task (Halliday, 1975).

Tenor. Referred to the role relationship among the participants in a task (Halliday, 1975).

Mode. Referred to the channel of communication and the part played by language in the total event (Halliday, 1975).

Teacher Contingent. Referred to action in the classroom during literacy instruction when the teacher was in control and the student's experiences depended on teacher selected activities and instructions (Watson, 1984).

Text Contingent. Referred to action in the classroom when only the language of a text was permitted or the text gave direction to the language and helped determine the nature of the activity (Watson, 1984).

Reader/Writer Contingent. Referred to action in the classroom when the children were encouraged or allowed to initiate or change a literacy instruction activity (Watson, 1984).

Transactional. Referred to action in the classroom when the reader/writer, the text, and the teacher were involved (Watson, 1984).

Concept of Written Language. The children's theoretical orientation to writing and use of writing patterns and conventions.

Writing Patterns. Referred to the child's routine use of nonstandard print, standard print, random letters and numerals, combinations of nonstandard and standard print,

pictures, letters and numerals in organized sequences and conventional graphic representations.

Nonstandard Print. "Scribbles" or marks that a child makes with a writing tool that are meaningful to the writer.

Standard Print. Referred to the use of conventional letter and numeral forms in writing which are meaningful to the writer.

Alternative Scripts. Referred to the use of manuscript or cursive-like forms of writing.

Invented Spelling. Referred to nonstandard spellings produced by a child's use of the knowledge of letter names and letter sounds.

Writing Format. Referred to the arrangement of print in a specific framework for example, a paragraph, letter or list.

Mechanics Theoretical Orientation to Written Language. Referred to teachers' and children's expressed emphasis on legibility, letter formation, grammar, spelling and vocabulary when asked to consider the construction of written language.

Communication Theoretical Orientation to Written Language. Referred to teachers' and children's stated emphasis on the construction of text which has the purpose of sharing message intent effectively with an audience when asked to consider the writing process.

Metalinguistic Description. Referred to a description of the children's talk about language when asked to consider the writing process.

PROCEDURES

The study attempted to explore the impact of teachers' theoretical orientation to literacy on children's developing concepts of writing. It could best be described as longitudinal, descriptive investigation which incorporated ethnographic techniques. Through the use of interviews, classroom observations, and videotape recordings the teachers' beliefs about methods, materials, and criteria for evaluation in writing were explored.

Data collection considerations were divided in two major components, the teachers and the students. Specifically, two teachers participated in this investigation. The two theoretical orientations selected for study represented a mechanics/skills and communications/ whole language view of literacy (DeFord, 1980). These teachers were observed on four separate mornings during the course of one school year. The observational periods took place with two researchers in attendance whose roles in the classroom were peripheral in nature. The researchers never attempted (1) to initiate or terminate an episode; (2) to repair disrupted activity; (3) to settle disputes; or (4) to coordinate or direct activity. Their sole purpose during the observational periods was to record information using the following conventions:

1. field notes - information on the participants, setting, and the nature and duration of interactive episodes.

2. personal notes
3. methodological notes
4. theoretical notes (Strauss, 1964)

The use of such conventions allowed the researchers to separate out different types of information in the data and insure that varying types of data were tied to the specific interactive context in which they occurred.

Independent researchers' field notes were compared for reliability. As the analysis proceeded the researchers searched for patterns in field notes over time and across and within interactive episodes which highlighted salient characteristics of teachers' orientations to and students' understanding of literacy. Analysis of the field notes involved three specific processes: (1) the identification of consistent patterns in field notes; (2) the generation, initial testing, and refinement of working hypotheses; and (3) the theoretical sampling of additional field observations.

Two separate two-hour videotape recordings were cut during the initial and final data collection sessions for the investigation. After data were collected, the research team viewed the tapes with the following basic questions in mind:

1. What stimulus and support for spontaneous use of literacy behaviors are offered in the classroom?
2. Do observed literacy events emerge from and depend on the teacher, the text, the reader/writer, or a transaction of all three?

3. How much actual instructional time is provided for literacy development (specifically reading and writing)?

Additionally, the tapes were used to verify information obtained during teacher interviews and from the recorded observational notes.

These methods of cross referencing of data provided estimates of validity for research interpretations (Corsaro, 1981). The tapes were described during triangulation sessions conducted by the researchers with the appropriate teacher in attendance. The teachers viewed the videotape recordings with the researchers to confirm the analyses and hypotheses generated.

Prior to the initial videotapings, each teacher responded to the DeFord Theoretical Orientation to Reading Profile (DeFord, 1978) and to Perceptions of Literacy Development: A Teacher Interview (McCully, 1982) (Appendix B).

In October, the teachers were requested to rank each pupil in their class according to their perception of their children's academic ability. The best student received a rank of one, the second student a rank of two, and so on. Three high, three middle, and three low students in each class as determined by the teachers' rankings completed the Writing Interview (McCully, 1982) and Preschool Children's Concept of Writing (Goodman & Cox, 1977) (Appendix B). This same procedure was repeated in April to provide pre-test/

post-test assessment of the children's concepts related to and facility with writing.

In December, February, and April uninterrupted writing experiences involving the nine selected students from each classroom were conducted and later analyzed using DeFord's (1980) Analysis of Conventions and McCully's (1982) Analysis of Writing Patterns (Appendix A).

Three judges participated in this investigation by independently viewing videotape recordings and serving as evaluators of data analysis which was initially completed by the principal investigator. Only information on which consensus was reached was reported in the study.

RESULTS

Investigations using ethnographic techniques consider the processes used by subjects as well as the end products produced by these subjects. In the present investigation, the teachers and children were videotaped while engaged in a "typical" classroom day. This data collection technique allowed the researcher to conduct an indepth analysis of these interactive processes. The exploration of written language use of these 18 children was continued with the investigator's collection of their actual written language productions. Teachers also responded to a questionnaire and interview questions. Their answers provided information about their theoretical orientations to written language and the classrooms' learning environment. After completion of the outlined data collection procedures, subjects' and teachers' responses were placed in categories established by the investigator to present a summary of the data pertinent to the research objectives. The children's metalinguistic descriptions of the writing process, examples of writing patterns and use of writing conventions were evaluated.

Teacher's Theoretical Orientation to Written Language

The DeFord Theoretical Orientation to Reading Profile (TORP)(1978) and Perceptions of Literacy Development: A Teacher Interview (McCully, 1982) provided significant information about each teacher's theoretical orientation to literacy.

A theoretical orientation to literacy development encompasses the beliefs upon which a teacher bases, organizes and presents the language curriculum. In this study the TORP was used to confirm each teacher's stated instructional base and provided a uniform measure that profiled individual theoretical position. Using the TORP twenty-eight statements about literacy instruction were presented to the two volunteer teachers.

On two (2) of the twenty-eight (28) items teachers were diametrically opposed in their responses. On a five point scale the mechanics/skills teacher strongly agreed and the communication/whole-language teacher strongly disagreed with the following statements.

TORP Items

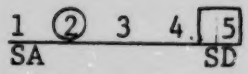
4. Fluency and expression are necessary components of reading that indicate good comprehension. [1] 2 3 4 (5) SA SD

11. It is important for a word to be repeated a number of times after it has been introduced to insure that it will become a part of sight vocabulary. [1] 2 3 4 (5) SA SD

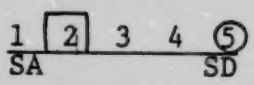
On five items, the communication/whole-language teacher and the mechanics/skills teacher were three steps apart. On the profile below, the communication/whole language teacher's preferences are circled, and a square surrounds the mechanics/skills teacher's responses.

3. Dividing words into syllables according to rules is a helpful instructional practice for reading new words. 1 [2] 3 4 (5) SA SD

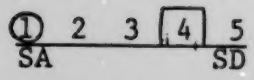
5. Materials for early reading should be written in natural language without concern for short, simple words and sentences.



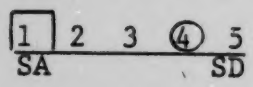
9. Reversals (e.g., saying "saw" for "was") are significant problems in the teaching of reading.



17. It is not necessary for a child to know the letters of the alphabet in order to learn to read.

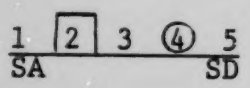


21. Formal instruction in reading is necessary to insure the adequate development of all the skills used in reading.

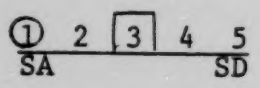


The teachers' responses to the following nine items were two steps apart.

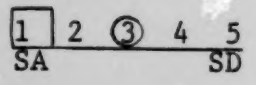
6. When children do not know a word, they should be instructed to sound out its parts.



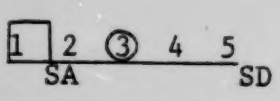
7. It is a good practice to allow children to edit what is written into their own dialect when learning to read.



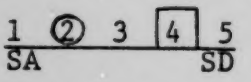
12. Paying close attention to punctuation marks is necessary to understanding story content.



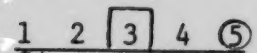
13. It is a sign of an ineffective reader when words and phrases are repeated.



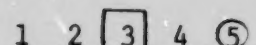
18. Flashcard drill with sight words is an unnecessary form of practice in reading instruction.



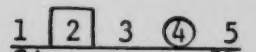
19. Ability to use accent patterns in multisyllable words (pho'to graph, pho to' graphy, and (pho to gra'phic) should be developed as a part of reading instruction.



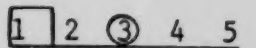
20. Controlling text through consistent spelling patterns (The fat cat ran back. The fat cat sat on a hat.) is a means by which children can best learn to read.



24. Word shapes (word configuration, should be taught in reading to aid in word recognition.

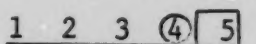


25. It is important to teach skills in relation to other skills.

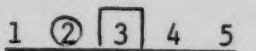


The mechanic/skills teacher and the communication/whole-language teacher were one step apart in their responses to the following items.

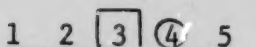
2. An increase in reading errors is usually related to a decrease in comprehension.



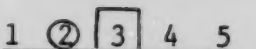
8. The use of a glossary or dictionary is necessary in determining the meaning and pronunciation of new words.



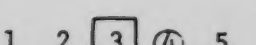
14. Being able to label words according to grammatical function (nouns, etc.) is useful in proficient reading.



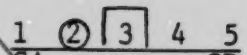
16. Young readers need to be introduced to the root form of words (run, long) before they are asked to read inflected forms (running, longest).



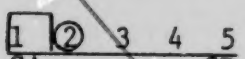
22. Phonic analysis is the most important form of analysis used when meeting new words.



26. If a child says "house" for the written word "home", the response should be left uncorrected.

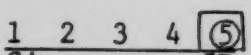


28. Some problems in reading are caused by readers dropping the inflectional endings from words (e.g., jumps, jumped).

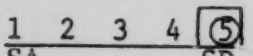


On five of the items the teachers agreed in their answers.

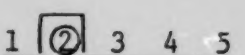
1. A child needs to be able to verbalize the rules of phonics in order to assure proficiency in processing new words.



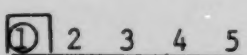
10. It is a good practice to correct a child as soon as an oral reading mistake is made.



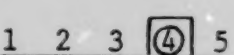
15. When coming to a word that's unknown, the reader should be encouraged to guess based upon meaning and go on.



23. Children's initial encounters with print should focus on meaning, not upon exact graphic representation.



27. It is not necessary to introduce new words before they appear in the reading text.



The mechanics/skills teacher's score of 70 on the TORP fell comfortably into the skills profile according to criteria outlined in the TORP abstract. The second teacher selected to participate in this research project obtained a total score of 112 on the TORP. This score falls within the range for an educator holding a whole-language position according to criteria outlined in the TORP abstract.

Responses to Perceptions of Literacy Development: A Teacher Interview indicated that the mechanics/skills teacher did not believe her students read or wrote at the beginning of the school year. While she reported that she read to the class on a regular basis, she indicated that she did not write to her students. Children in the class reportedly had opportunities to observe her write at her desk and do an "occasional experience chart lesson."

Generally information obtained from this teacher suggested that she believed in sequential writing instruction which paralleled closely her statements in relation to reading. She emphasized standardized writing instruction through the use of specific published curricular materials which were sequenced within and across the elementary grade levels.

The communication/whole-language teacher responses to the interview questions indicated that this teacher viewed all children in her classroom as readers and writers. She noted varying levels of efficiency with the two processes in her students but listed specific behaviors exhibited by the children which suggested they were written language users. This teacher read and wrote to the students in her class on a regular basis.

Generally, information obtained from this educator indicated that she believed in developmentally-based writing instruction. She emphasized the need for individualized instruction determined by the level of development of writing processes in the children.

Characteristics of Kindergarten Classrooms' Register

Language "resides" in social and situational contexts, an environment of meaning potential, and it differs according to context (Watson, 1984). The term register refers to the environmental determinants of language transactions in a given setting. M.A.K. Halliday (1978) suggested that register is determined by field, tenor and mode. In this research the characteristics of the register present in the kindergarten classrooms were addressed by breaking down the data into the subcategories of field, tenor and mode.

Field

An adaptation of the Survey of Displayed Literacy Stimuli (Loughlin and Cole, 1984) (Appendix A) was used to examine the learning environments in the two classrooms to determine the level of stimulus and support for use of literacy behaviors present in each. The amount and types of print present in the two learning environments differed greatly.

The mechanics/skills teacher provided a collection of children's literature, displayed pictures related to sound/symbol associations under study, provided writing tools and materials, displayed the letters of the alphabet, displayed one handwritten poster outlining the classroom rules, and posted labels on teacher constructed bulletin boards. The type and amount of print in this classroom remained consistent over the course of the research project.

In contrast, fourteen of the sixteen categories were consistently represented in the communication/whole-language learning environment during this investigation. Children's productions of written language as well as language experience stories were displayed in a variety of areas within the classroom and in the adjacent hallway. Collections of children's books were clearly visible throughout the room. They contained both trade and reference books and their covers were displayed. A variety of writing tools and materials were readily available for the children to select from. Notes from parents to the teacher were posted on the door jamb leading to the hall. All cabinets, pieces of equipment, "cubbies", and boxes were labeled to give information concerning contents, use or ownership. Teacher and children constructed bulletin boards were observed to be present in the room. Additionally, materials used to display information were readily accessible to the children. Table 1 presents a summary of the types and amount of printed stimuli in the classrooms.

Tenor

In this investigation the subcategory of tenor was included in order to examine the relationships between teachers and their students during literacy instruction. The divisions in this subcategory were teacher contingent, text contingent, reader/writer contingent, and transactional.

Table 1

Displayed Literacy Stimuli

Categories	Classroom Observation							
	M1	C1	M2	C2	M3	C3	M4	C4
1. presence of messages about the current day	N	Y	N	Y	N	Y	N	Y
2. presence of current child written or dictated messages, labels, stories	N	Y	N	Y	N	Y	N	Y
3. presence of print or writing segments related to nearby materials, objects pictures	N	Y	N	Y	N	Y	N	Y
4. presence of books related to nearby materials, objects, or pictures	N	Y	N	Y	N	Y	N	Y
5. presence of different kinds of books	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
6. presence of different kinds of recording tools	N	Y	N	Y	N	Y	N	Y
7. presence of different kinds of recording materials	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
8. presence of different references	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
9. presence of displayed directions for activity	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N

Categories	Classroom Observation							
	M1	C1	M2	C2	M3	C3	M4	C4
10. presence of sign-up, sign-out charts or sheets	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N
11. presence of community culture/language books or print segments	N	Y	N	Y	N	Y	N	Y
12. presence of empty display space	N	Y	N	Y	N	Y	N	Y
13. presence of display tools	N	Y	N	Y	N	Y	N	Y
14. presence of functional labels	N	Y	N	Y	N	Y	N	Y
15. presence of books with cover or page displayed	N	Y	N	Y	N	Y	N	Y
16. presence of displayed handwritten or machine print segments, clear and legible	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Total number of yes responses per observation	4	14	4	14	4	14	4	14

N=Not present Y=Present M=Mechanics C=Communication

In every case, activities which took place in the mechanics/skills classroom during literacy instruction were initiated by the teacher and contingent on the teacher or text. The relationship between the teacher and her students were characterized by the following type of exchanges:

MT: Let me have (names 5 children). That helps a lot if we have our rows. Ok. We are ready to do some work in our study book. And we're going to start on page 30 where we'll meet some different letters. What does a 30 look like? _____?

CH: Three and a 0.

MT: Three and a 0. Just about finished up our book. What are the new letters on this page?

CH: U, V, W, X.

MT: What else? Two more.

CH: Y and Z.

MT: Y and Z. Which part of the alphabet would these be in? First, middle, or last?

CH: Last.

MT: The very last part. Let's take a look at the letter U. The letter u, we made a lot of those yesterday. Notice how you're going to print over the lines, to print over the lines in u. Let's try it all together. Go down, then we're going to come back up, and straight down on the side. I mentioned to you yesterday that we go down, up, and down. Let's look at the small u and see if they're made the same way. There's a word there--two words. What does it say.

CH: Umbrella.

MT: Umbrella, right. Why don't you spell it for me, _____?

CH: U...m...b...r...e...l...l...a.

MT: Good. _____, do you think this is a long word or a short word?

CH: Long.

MT: Long. Very long. Let's look at the next letter--v. I want you to notice something about the v. There's a special way you make it. Someone show me what they think--the way it goes together? _____?

MT: All right. Let's look at the y. Capital y. Watch my finger for a minute. This is kind of unusual. Let me see all eyes up here. Down, down, straight down. So it's a v on top of a stick.

MT: All right. The z goes across the top, slants down, across the bottom. What's that picture there, _____?

CH: Zebra.

MT: What sound does z make?

CH: 'Za'.

MT: 'Za', right. Look on p. 31. In the first row are three pictures. Watermelon, valentine, and violin. Two of those pictures there say the same sound. Do you know which they are? If so, put an x. . .watermelon, valentine, violin. What sound do we hear when we say watermelon, _____?

CH: 'Wa'.

MT: 'Wa' sound. A w sound. Put a w above the watermelon, please. A little one for a reminder--'wa' for watermelon. Remember, down, down, down, down. Which begin the same?

CH: Valentine and violin.

MT: Correct. Valentine and violin. What sound is that?

CH: 'Va'.

MT: 'Va', right, for valentine and violin. Two lines down. Now, go to the next row. Wagon, witch, and vase. Put an x on the pictures in that row that sound alike. All right. Which two did you mark, _____?

CH: Wagon and witch.

MT: You're right. They make 'wa' sounds. All right. What about the vase? What sound does it make?

CH: 'Va'.

MT: 'Va' sound. Let's do the next row. Zebra, yellow, yo yo. Find two there and put x's on them. Yo yo and yellow--what sound do they make, _____?

MT: Put your pencils in the can and go over and sit down by the calendar.

In each instance the teacher initiated the activity and maintained total control throughout the event until she gave the direction for termination.

The majority of activities in the communication/whole language classroom were considered to be transactional in nature. The following transcript was representative of the exchanges which occurred in this classroom. This particular event took place following free playtime during which a child had drawn a picture and requested another child to write for him.

CT: Ok. We have to hurry up and get our jobs ready. _____, it's your job to erase the board. But, before you erase it, look at the nice job _____ did with his name today. Is _____ learning how to write his name?

CH: Yeah.

CT: Really doing a good job. And, look, would the person who made this really fine picture stand up? _____. _____ what does your little paper say? You dictated the words and I know _____ put it down for you.

CH: I like cows.

CT: What kind of cows? You even said what kind of cows they were and what color they were.

CH: I like orange cows.

CT: (Laugh) Did anyone ever see an orange cow?

CHS: No.

CT: That reminds me of a story. Ok? I like white cows. That's it. Now, _____, you can erase the board, please. That reminded me of a cow of a different color. I've never seen a purple cow. What would you do if you were a purple cow?

CH: I would eat grass, moo, and jump over the fence.

CT: Even cows do that, don't they? But there might be one other thing you might do if you were a purple cow. Three things: she would eat grass. What was the second thing? Anybody remember the second thing?

CH: Jump over the fence.

CT: Jump over the fence was the third thing. What was the second thing she said she'd do? They have to be in order. I would eat grass. . .

CH: And I would moo.

CT: I would moo. And then I would jump over the fence.

CH: I would give purple popsicles.

CT: (Laugh) Purple popsicles. I thought you would say purple milk but purple popsicles would be even better. _____ has written a story and I'm going to take the time to put it on the board. Would you like to watch me put the story on the board? Let's put the story on the board. Here we go. It is fun to be able to put your stories in writing. The Purple Cow. I would. . .what did we say comes next?

CH: Eat grass.

CT: I would eat grass (writes as speaks). I would. . .

CH: Moo.

CT: I need some help. Tell me how to write moo. (Asks volunteer to come to board and take over the writing.)

CH: Moo. (Child writes.)

CT: That's a little dot right there (points to period).

CH: That's a period. (Continue constructing text.)

CT: Good for you. Will you help read the story?

CH: Yes.

CT & CH: The Purple Cow. I would eat grass. I would moo. I would jump over the fence. I would give purple popsicles.

CT: Who really wrote the story?

CT: _____. Let's put their names up here. Because, what are people who write things called?

CHS: Stories.

CT: Storytellers, story writers, or authors. By, _____, _____, _____. They're the authors. Now. Who would like to read our story all by

themselves? Ok, _____. Stand up and read it all by yourself. Stand over here.

CH: It's hard.

CT: Why don't you start it out. What's the title?

CH: The Purple Cow.

CT: Now, how does it start out? Look at the very first line. What was the first thing? Remember? _____, you read the title so would you like to read one more line and then choose a person to read the rest of it? Ok. I what?

CH: I don't know how to read. . .

CT: Ok. If you don't want to read it, would you choose someone that has their hand up; and let them read it?

CH: _____.

CT: Ok. Come up here, _____. This is a good place for you to read it.

CH: (Silence)

CT: We know the first line--The Purple Cow. Now, read this line. I would what?

CH: Eat grass.

CT: Read the next line.

CH: Pause.

CT: How does it start out, _____?

CH: I would. . .

CT: Let's let _____ do it. Can you read it along starting with I? (together--I would.)

CH: I will. . .

CH: I would eat grass.

CT: Read the next line. I like the way you're sitting waiting.

CH: I would jump over the fence.

CT: Good job.

CH: I would. . . I would. . .

CT: Remember the things you can do if you come to a word you don't know. You can think about it, copy somecne else's, or look it up. You can even ask for help, couldn't you?

CH: You can spell it by yourself.

CT: Spell it by yourself, that's another idea. Would you like some help? Ok. Ask someone. Point to the letter or word that you need help with. Ask someone who has their hand up.

CH: _____.

CT: Can you help with this word? _____?

CH: It starts like 'go'.

CT: It starts like 'go'. That's a good hint. Can I tell you the word? Everyone is getting a little bit tired. I would give. . .That's another thing you can do--you can always ask the teacher.

CH: I would give popsicles.

CT: Well, let's let him finish the story.

CH: I would give popsicles. . .purple popsicles.

CT: Purple popsicles. Let's give him a hand. Ok? (Clap) Everyone sit on your hands a minute and let's read the story together. Everyone:

ALL: "The Purple Cow. I would eat grass. I would moo. I would jump over the fence. I would give purple milk."

CH: Popsicles!

As evident in this activity the communication/whole-language teacher often initiated literacy events but the

students were encourages to change or make modifications in the task or daily schedule. This teachers classroom interactions were reflective and cooperative relationships between individuals. Children and adults in this room could best be described as colleagues in literacy learning.

Mode

This subcategory focused upon how much time was provided for literacy instruction throughout the school day by the two teachers and the kind of attention given to the linguistic and pragmatic systems of language.

In the mechanics/skills classroom time for reading instruction was reportedly provided three days per week throughout the school year. The mechanics/skills teacher indicated that time for writing was not allocated until January. At that point she set aside time one day per week and increased time to two days per week by the close of the school year. Figures 1 and 2 give the class schedules for the first and second semesters respectively.

Field notes and videotape recordings suggested that the actual length of time provided for literacy instruction was 99.9 minutes, for a mean length of 24.97 minutes per observed school day. The range of time for writing and/or reading instruction was from no time spent per day to 50 minutes of instruction which was for the most part divided between three "reading" groups.

In this classroom the linguistic systems (graphic/phonemic, lexial/grammatical and semantic) were isolated and

Figure 1

First Semester's Daily Schedule
Mechanics/Skills Classroom

8:40-8:45	Look at books
8:45-9:00	Opening exercises pledge calendar attendance
9:00-9:30	P.E. or Music
9:30-10:00	Group discussion related to unit of study and an art project.
10:00-10:15	Recess
10:15-10:30	Drinks/Rest
10:30-11:00	Readiness work Math and Reading
11:00-11:15	Free Play
11:15-11:45	Music and Story
11:50-	Dismiss

Figure 2

Second Semester's Daily Schedule
Mechanics/Skills Classroom

8:40-8:45	Look at books	
8:45-9:00	Opening exercises pledge calendar attendance	
9:00-9:30	P.E. or Music	
9:30-10:00	Monday-Consonant Work Tuesday-Math Wednesday-Science or Social Studies Unit work Thursday-Math Friday-Consonant Work	
10:00-10:15	Recess	
10:15-10:30	Drinks	
10:30-11:30	Monday Wednesday - Friday	Stations and Reading Readiness Work
	Tuesday - Thursday	Art Activity
11:30-11:45	Story	
11:50	Dismiss	

made the focus of instruction. The mechanics/skills teacher in this study spend the majority of the literacy instructional time drawing the children's attention to sound/symbol matching and correct and neat letter formation. When children were given the opportunity to independently construct written language on most occasions they selected to copy portions of text from library books or words from bulletin board labels. This teacher presented writing instruction and writing (composing) as separate entities. Children did not compose during writing instruction; nor did the teacher interact with students during time for composing nor upon completion of the task. She was observed to be involved in the writing process only at the point of topic suggestion and to direct disposal of final products. At no time was this teacher observed to comment on the children's work nor were they displayed in the classroom.

In the communication/whole-language classroom time for reading and writing were provided on a daily basis according to the teacher. The daily classroom schedule is shown in Figure 3. According to videotape recordings and researcher's field notes the total length of time provided for literacy instruction was 249 minutes, with a mean of 62.25 minutes per day. Numerous opportunities for literacy events were encouraged each day.

From the initial data collection day the communication/whole-language teacher focused on meaning. She read aloud to the children and invited them to share ideas and concepts

Figure 3

Daily Schedule
Communication/Whole-Language Classroom

8:55-9:25	Free Choice Library Games Writing Drawing Playhouse
9:25-9:40	Learning Rows (large group)
	Monday, Wednesday — Language Arts Activity
	Tuesday, Thursday — Mathematics Activity
9:40-10:30	Stations (7 choices-children rotate) flannel board listening (tapes & books) writing books painting math art paper
10:30-10:45	Literature Experience
10:45-11:05	Recess or Comfort Break
11:05-11:40	Music or P.E.
11:40-11:50	Summarize Day

Note: Fridays in this classroom are called "upside down days". Each Friday is different. The teacher uses this day to complete special projects or meet the needs for classroom flexibility.

related to the text. The children were encouraged to talk with each other about their work and were regularly observed assisting each other.

When students were given opportunities to independently construct written language they wrote about classroom activities and personally meaningful experiences. The focus of the writing instruction was on topic and information. This teacher often received the children's products by reading or listening to the message of the story, inquiring further about information within the story, and/or making it possible for the child to share the message with a peer. The children's productions were displayed in numerous areas of the room and bound into classroom books.

Register Differences and Similarities

The two classrooms observed in this study exhibited numerous differences in their learning environments' register.

Opportunities to interact with print were limited in the mechanics/skills classroom. Books and opportunities to compose played peripheral roles in this setting. Children leafed through books if they finished assigned tasks early and wrote only after having copied a picture from a text or some other professionally printed material.

In the communication/whole-language classroom printed information abounded and children were encouraged to get involved with these materials. Numerous invitations were

extended to the children each day to engage in the construction of meaning through reading and writing.

Relationships between teacher and students differed greatly in the two rooms. In the mechanics/skills classroom the teacher remained in control of all literacy activities. This teacher directed the activities, and action in this classroom was completely dependent on her. In contrast, the communication/whole-language classroom was characterized by cooperative effort. All persons in the room were viewed as colleagues, sources of information and assistance, and/or as receptive members of an audience. On many occasions the day's planned activities were altered or changed to accommodate a child's special interest, need or project.

Register differences also included difference in the amount of time spent in reading and writing instruction. Children in the communication/whole-language classroom spent over two times the amount of time for reading and writing instruction as did children in the mechanics/skills classroom. A literacy event was longer from start to finish, in the communication/whole-language classroom than the mechanics/skills classroom. Children in the communication/whole-language classroom were observed to be involved in large group, small group and individual literacy events. Whether working with the teacher or peers the children were constantly constructing meaning with written language (reading and writing). In the mechanics/skills classroom reading/writing activities and interactions with

print were generally restricted to times when the teacher was working directly with a small group. Individual and large group written language activities were not an integral part of the curriculum in this classroom. The teacher in this room noted that many days there was not enough time for this type of activity.

Kindergarten Children's Concepts of Written Language

The classroom learning environments of these 18 kindergarten children have been discussed in considerable detail. The children's concepts of written language will now be described to determine to what extent, if any, the children's knowledge of written language was affected by the teachers' assumptions about their students' ability to construct written language.

The investigator met with each child for approximately 30 minutes on two different occasions. Once in November and again in April to complete the Writing Interview (McCully, 1982) and Preschool Children's Concept of Writing (Goodman and Cox, 1977). This allowed the researchers to provide pre-test/post-test assessment of the children's concepts related to and facility with writing. In addition, teachers participating in the study collected writing samples from each child in December, February and March.

Children's Metalinguistic Descriptions of the Writing Process

Children's descriptions of the writing process were

obtained through responses to questions from Preschool Children's Concepts of Writing (Goodman and Cox, 1976). The kindergarten children involved in this study evidenced diverse knowledge of the writing process.

The children in the mechanics/skills classroom viewed the purpose for writing (i.e., reasons people write) in a variety of ways. At the beginning of the project five of the children could not give a specific purpose for writing. When the investigation concluded eight students could articulate definite reasons for writing (e.g., writing notes, writing cards or as an alternative to telephoning).

When children explained the difference between writing and drawing, there was evidence of confusion between the two processes. Initially eight of the children could not clearly state how writing and drawing differed from each other. Upon completion of the study seven students remained unable to express at least one distinction. One of the children explained the difference by describing writing as having to do with letters or numbers and/or drawing as related to pictures. Tables 2 and 3 depict the children's descriptions of the construction of written language in the mechanics/skills classroom.

The students in the communication/whole-language classroom also viewed the writing process in diverse ways. When the study commenced seven of the children could not express a specific purpose for writing while two could give a specific purpose. At the close of the project five were

Table 2

Children's Initial Descriptions of the Writing Process
Mechanics/Skills Classroom

	Subjects									
		H			M			L		
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Total
1. Could not express a purpose for writing		x	x		x		x		x	5
2. Confusion between drawing and writing		x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	8
3. Expressed a specific purpose for writing	x			x		x		x		4
4. Differentiated between drawing and writing	x									1
5. Used terms letter or word when describing writing	x									1
6. Could identify a letter upon request	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	9
7. Could identify a word upon request	x	x	x	x	x		x	x	x	8

Table 3

Children's Final Descriptions of the Writing Process
Mechanics/Skills Classroom

Categories	Subjects H 1	2	3	4	M 5	6	7	L 8	9	Total
1. Could not express a purpose for writing	x									1
2. Confusion between drawing and writing	x	x	x	x	x		x	x	x	7
3. Expressed a specific purpose for writing		x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	8
4. Differentiated between drawing and writing				x		x				2
5. Used terms letter or word when describing writing							x		x	2
6. Could identify a letter upon request	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	9
7. Could identify a word upon request	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	9

able to state an explicit reason for writing (e.g., writing letters, grocery lists and/or phone messages).

Evidence of confusion between drawing and writing also existed when the children in this classroom were initially asked to explain the difference between the two processes. Four of the children were unable to explicitly articulate how writing and drawing are different. This was true at the conclusion of the study as well. One student in this classroom indicated that, "You can draw and write on the same page" and said, "You use different things to write. . . use a pen to write and draw with markers." Tables 4 and 5 depict the children's descriptions of the construction of written language in the communication/whole-language classroom.

Children's Writing Patterns

During the initial and final data collection sessions, all children were asked to write their name and "anything they wanted to write." Additionally, three other writing samples were collected by teachers and shared with the researchers. All of the subjects' responses to these tasks included at least an attempt to write their name.

The children's writing samples in the mechanics/skills classroom revealed diverse use of writing patterns (Table 6). Only one of the subjects from this classroom ever used scribbles, alternative scripts pictures, or numerals when asked to construct written language. The number of children using "random letters" (Figure 4) in their writings

Table 4

Children's Initial Descriptions of the Writing Process
Communication/Whole Language Classroom

Categories	Subjects H 1	2	3	4	M 5	6	7	L 8	9	Total
1. Could not express a purpose for writing		x		x	x	x	x	x	x	7
2. Confusion between drawing and writing	x		x				x	x		4
3. Expressed a specific purpose for writing	x	x								2
4. Differentiated between drawing and writing		x		x	x	x			x	5
5. Used terms letter or word when describing writing		x		x					x	3
6. Could identify a letter upon request	x	x	x	x			x		x	6
7. Could identify a word upon request	x	x	x	x						4

Table 5

Children's Final Descriptions of the Writing Process
Communication/Whole Language Classroom

Categories	Subjects H 1	2	3	4	M 5	6	7	8	L 9	Total
1. Could not express a purpose for writing					x	x	x		x	4
2. Confusion between drawing and writing						x		x		2
3. Expressed a specific purpose for writing	x	x	x	x				x		5
4. Differentiated drawing and writing	x	x	x	x	x		x		x	7
5. Used terms letter or word when describing writing	x	x	x	x						4
6. Could identify a letter upon request	x	x	x	x	x			x	x	7
7. Could identify a word upon request	x	x	x	x	x					5

Table 6

Children's Use of Writing Patterns
Mechanics/Skills Classroom

Categories	Data Collection Session 1	2	3	4	5
1. Nonstandard Print					
a. scribbles					
b. alternative scripts		M9		M9	
c. pictures	M9	M9	M9		M9
2. Standard Print					
a. random letters	M3,M5 M7,M8 M9	M1,M3 M5,M7	M3,M4 M6,M7 M8,M9	M3,M6 M7,M9	M9
b. random numerals					M9
c. organized letter sequences	M2,M3 M8	M1,M2 (M9)	M2,M4 M6,M8 M9	M1,M2 M6,M8 M9	M1,M2 M4,M8 M9
d. invented spellings	M2	M2,M6	M1,M2 M4	M1,M2 M5	M1,M2 M4,M5
e. conventional graphic representations other than own name	M1,M2 M4,M6 M8	(M1),(M2) M3,M6 (M8),(M9)	M1,M2 M3,M4 (M5),M6 M8	M1,M2 (M4),M5 M6,(M8)	M1,M2 M3,M4 M5,M6 M7,M8 M9

O = Copied Material

Figure 4: "Random Letters"
Subject: M9

decreased to one by the end of the school year. Children using organized letter sequences (Figure 5) increased from three to five by the close of the project. The use of invented spellings also increased over the course of the investigation (Figure 6). When the final writing samples were collected all children had included conventional graphic representations other than their own name in their writings. (It should be noted that for the most part these standard spellings were copied from other printed material, family members' names, and/or known isolated words such as I, love, mom, you, etc.) (Figure 7).

In the communication/whole-language classroom two students consistently used scribbles in their writings (Figure 8). These same two students along with one other also incorporated alternative scripts and pictures in their responses to the request to write (Figure 9). These three students were ranked by the teacher as being "low" in academic achievement at the beginning of the school year. The numbers of students including organized letter sequences, invented spellings and conventional graphic representations increased when initial and final writing samples were compared (Figures 10 and 11). Table 7 characterizes the writing patterns used by children in the communication/whole-language classroom.

Children's Use of Letter Forms to Depict Meaning

These kindergarten children demonstrated varying knowledge and understanding of spelling and graphophonemic relationships (Tables 8 and 9).

Figure 5: Organized Letter Sequences
Subject: M1

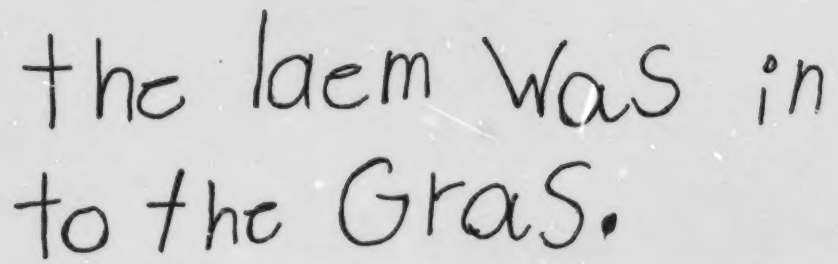


Figure 6: Invented Spellings
Subject: M4
"The lamb went into the grass."

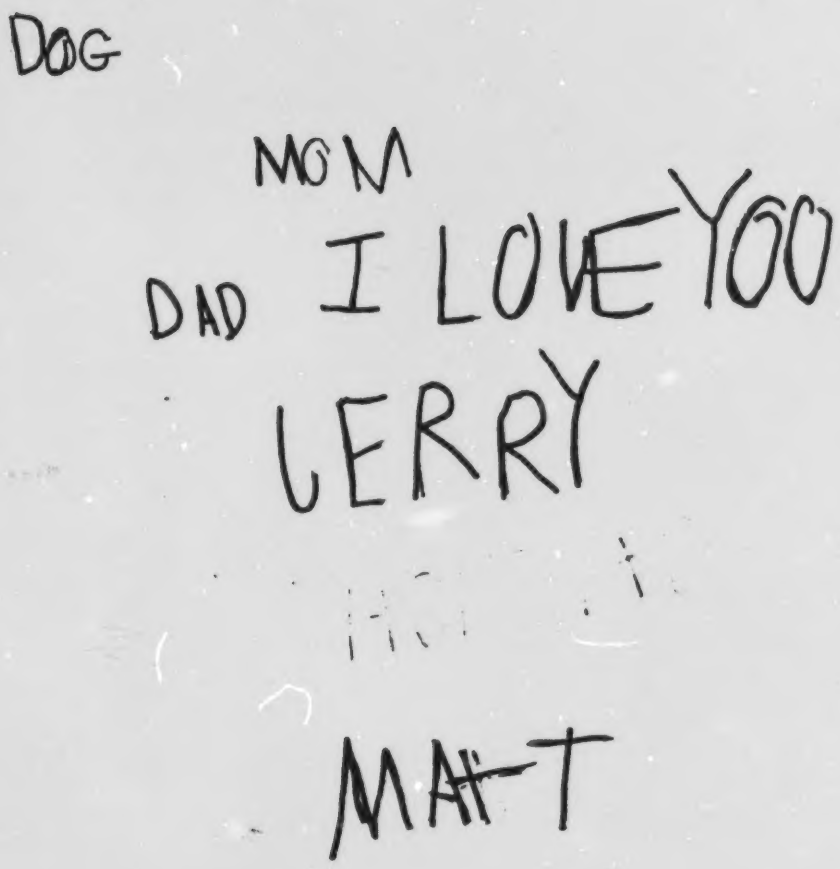


Figure 7: "Known Isolated Words"
Subject: M6

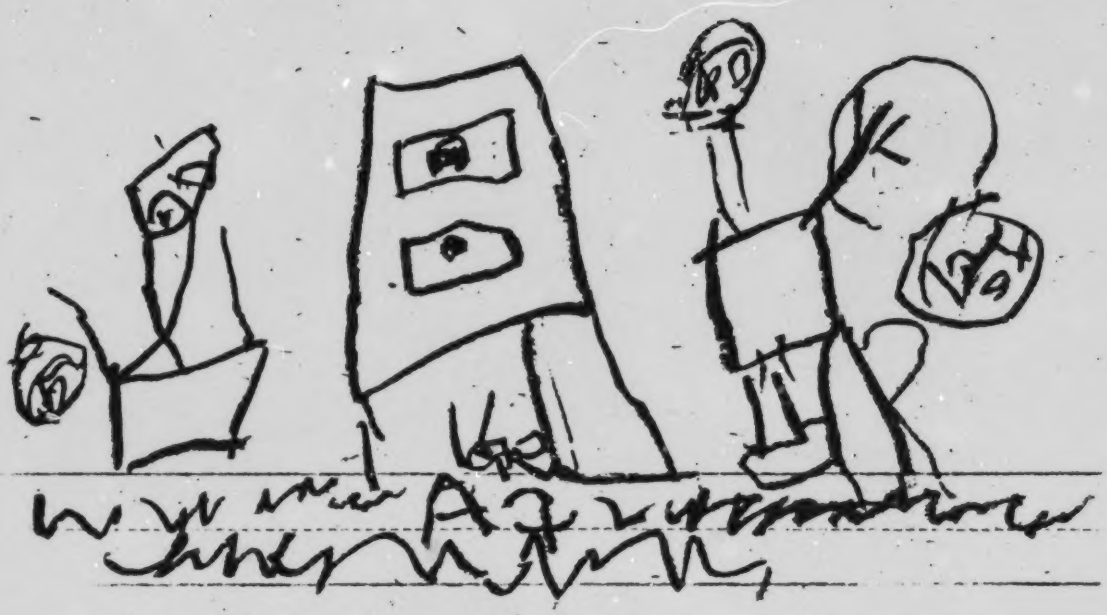


Figure 8: Scribbles
Subject: C9

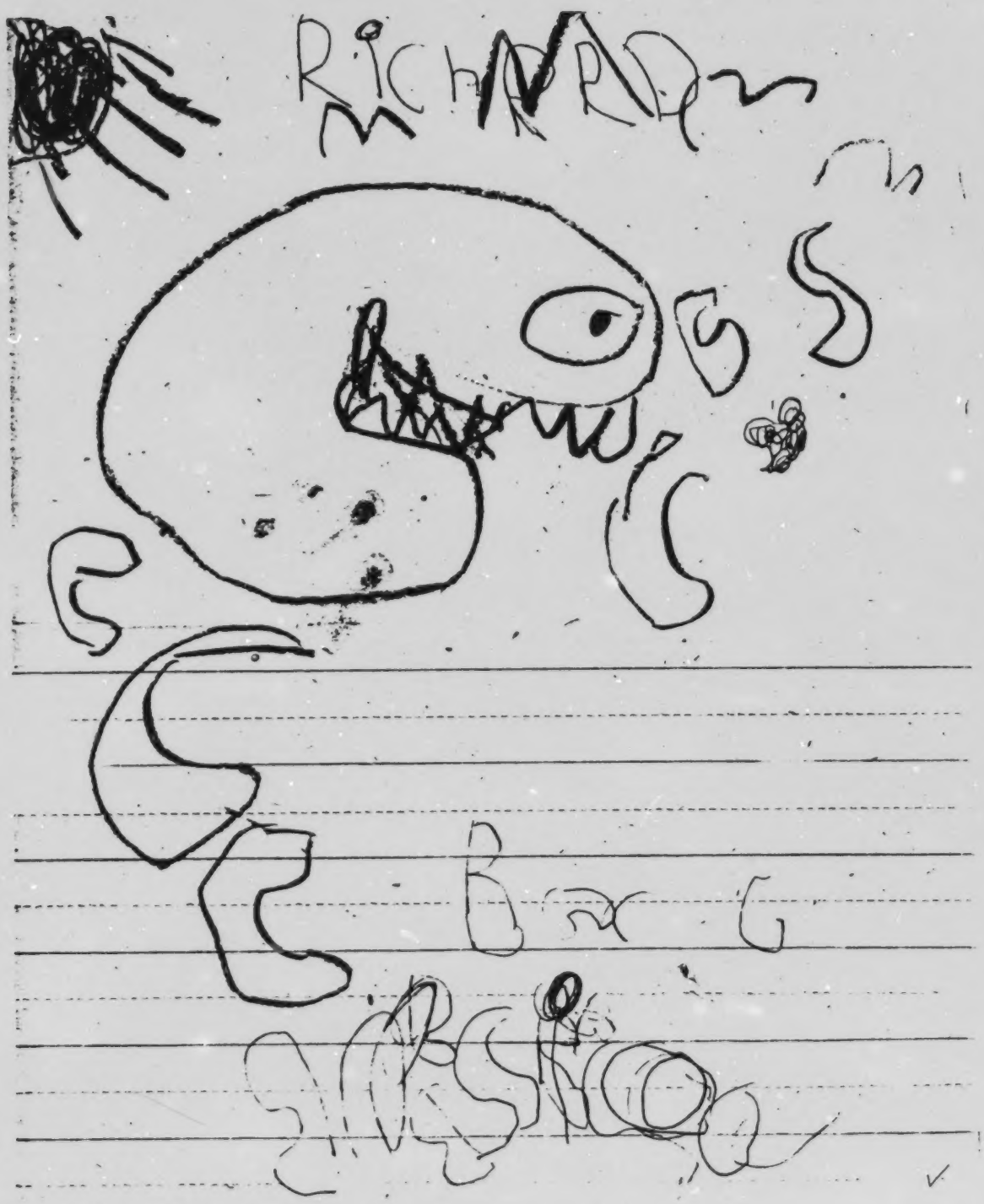


Figure 9: Alternative Scripts
Subject: C8

Figure 10: Organized Letter Sequences
Subject: C4
"I go to find our Easter Basket."

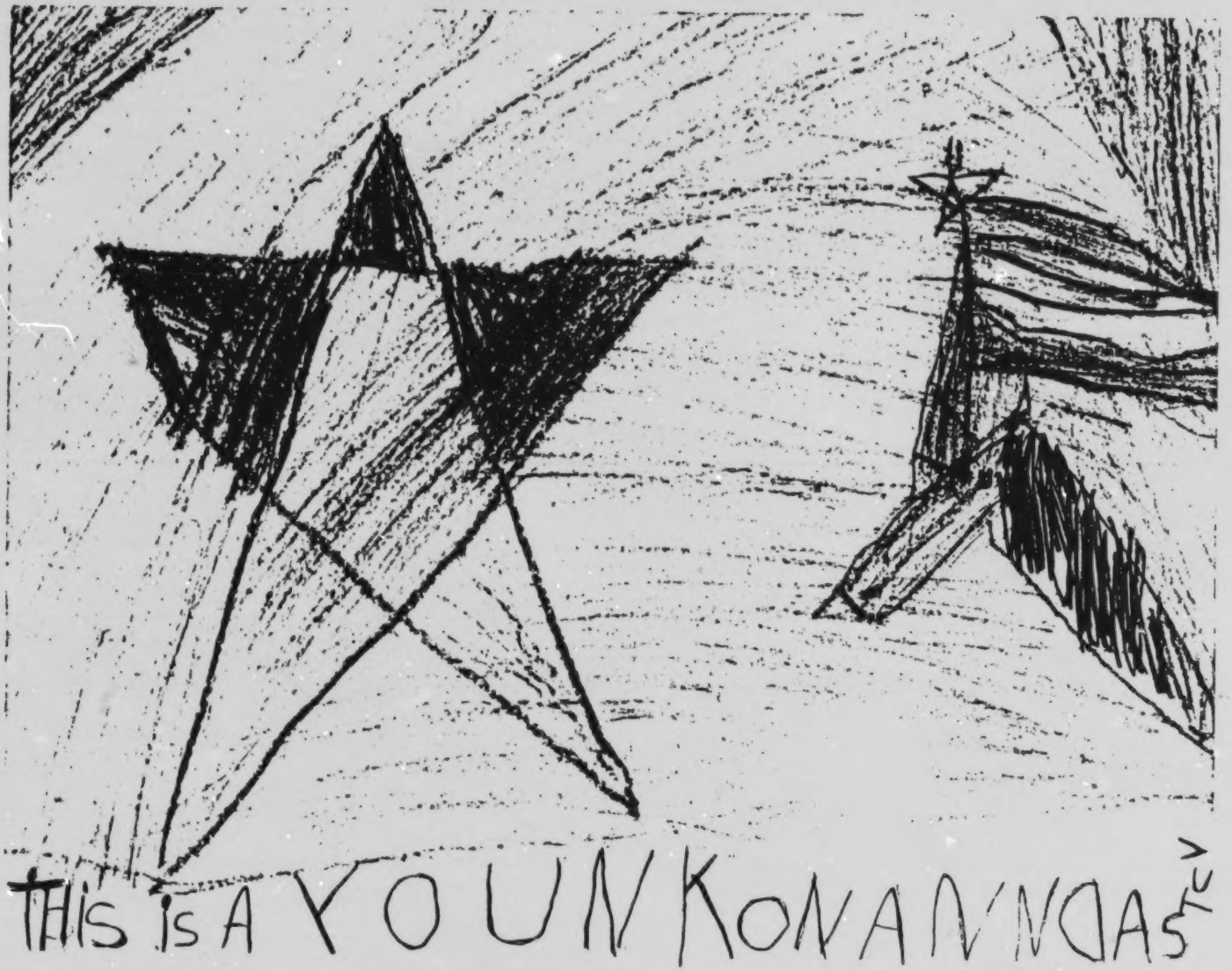


Figure 11: Invented Spellings
Subject: C2
"This is a unicorn and a star."

Table 7

Children's Use of Writing Patterns
Communication/Whole Language Classroom

Categories	Data Collection Session 1	2	3	4	5
1. Nonstandard Print					
a. scribbles	C7,C9	C7,C9	C7,C9	C7,C9	C7,C9
b. alternative scripts	C7,C8 C9	C7,C8 C9	C7,C8 C9	C7,C8 C9	C7,C8 C9
c. pictures	C7,C8 C9	C7,C8 C9	C7,C8 C9	C7,C8 C9	C7,C8 C9
2. Standard Print					
a. random letters	C5,C6 C8,C9	C5,C8 C9	C5,C8 C9	C5,C8 C9	C8,C9
b. random numerals	C5	C5	C5	C5	
c. organized letter sequences	C1,C3	C1,C2 C3,C4, C5	C1,C2 C3,C4 C5,C6	C1,C2 C3,C4 C5,C6	C1,C2 C3,C4 C6
d. invented spellings	C1,C3 C4	C1,C2 C3,C6	C1,C2 C3	C1,C2 C3,C4	C1,C2 C3,C4
e. conventional graphic representations other than own name	C1,C2 C3,C4 C5	C2,C3	C1,C2 C3	C1,C2 C3,C4 C6	C1,C2 C3,C4 C5,C6

Table 8

Children's Use of Letter Forms To Depict Meaning
Mechanics/Skills Classroom

Categories	Data Collection Session				
	1	2	3	4	5
1. Letter denotes meaning					
2. Letter represents one word					
3. Sequence of letters represents meaning	M2,M3 M7,M8 M9	M1,M2 M3,M5 M7	M3,M4 M6,M7 M8,M9	M1,M3 M6,M7 M8,M9	M1,M3 M8,M9
4. Letter denotes phoneme					
5. Letter represents syllable					
6. Matching letter names to sound	M1,M2 M4		M1,M2 M4,M6 M8	M1,M2 M5,M6	M1,M2 M3,M4 M5
7. Letters approximate standard spelling	M2	M1,M2 M6 (M8) (M9)	M2,M4 M8	M1,M2 M5	M1,M2 M4,M5
8. Vowel substitution	M2	M1,M2 M6	M2,M4	M1,M2	M1,M2 M4
9. Spells short vowels correctly					

Categories	Data Collection Session				
	1	2	3	4	5
10. Conventional graphic representations other than own name	M1,M2 M4,M6 M8	(M1),(M2) M4,M6 (M8),(M9)	M1,M2 M3,M4 (M5),M6 M8	M1,M2 M3,(M4) M5,M6 (M8)	M1,M2 M3,M4 M5,M6 M7,M8

O = Copied Material

Table 9

Children's Use of Letter Forms To Depict Meaning
Communication/Whole Language Classroom

Categories	Data Collection Session				
	1	2	3	4	5
1. Letter denotes meaning					
2. Letter represents one word					
3. Sequence of letters represents meaning	C1,C3 C4,C5 C6,C8 C9	C1,C2 C3,C4 C5,C6 C8,C9	C1,C2 C3,C4 C5,C6 C8,C9	C1,C2 C3,C4 C5,C6 C8,C9	C1,C2 C3,C4 C6,C8 C9
4. Letter denotes phoneme					
5. Letter represents syllable					
6. Matching letter names to sound	C1,C3 C4,C5	C1,C2 C3,C4 C5,C6	C1,C2 C3,C4	C1,C2 C3,C4 C6	C1,C2 C3,C4 C5
7. Letters approximate standard spelling	C1,C3 C4	C1,C2 C3,C6	C1,C2 C3	C1,C2 C3,C4	C1,C2 C3,C4
8. Vowel substitution		C1,C2 C3	C1,C2 C3	C1,C2 C3,C4	C1,C3 C4
9. Spells short vowels correctly		C3	C1,C2 C3	C1,C2 C3	C1,C2 C3,C4

	Categories	Data Collection Session				
		1	2	3	4	5
10.	Conventional graphic representations other than own name	C1,C2 C3,C4 C5	C2,C3	C1,C2 C3	C1,C2 C3,C4 C6	C1,C2 C3,C4 C5,C6

In the mechanics/skills classroom all children showed rudimentary spelling in one way or another. Letter sequences were used to represent meaning by eight of the nine subjects in the mechanics/skills classroom in at least one of their writing samples (Figure 5). Letter groupings which approximated standard were incorporated in the writings of seven children. These samples often contained evidence of appropriate sound/symbol matches and some vowel substitutions (Figure 6). Conventional graphic representations occurred on all nine of the subjects' samples.

In the communication/whole-language classroom eight of the nine children used sequences of letters to construct written language (Figure 12). Four of the nine children were observed to use letter groupings which approximated standard spellings. Generally, these spellings included appropriate sound/symbol relationships and vowel substitutions. (Figure 13). Conventional graphic representations were incorporated in the writings of six of these children.

Children's Use of Writing Conventions

The children in these classrooms used a variety of conventions in their writings (Tables 10 and 11). In the mechanics/skills classroom all subjects' productions clearly showed differentiation between drawing and writing and the use of letters. Nine of the students wrote isolated words (Figure 14). Seven of the nine children's samples included material copied directly from other sources (Figure 15).

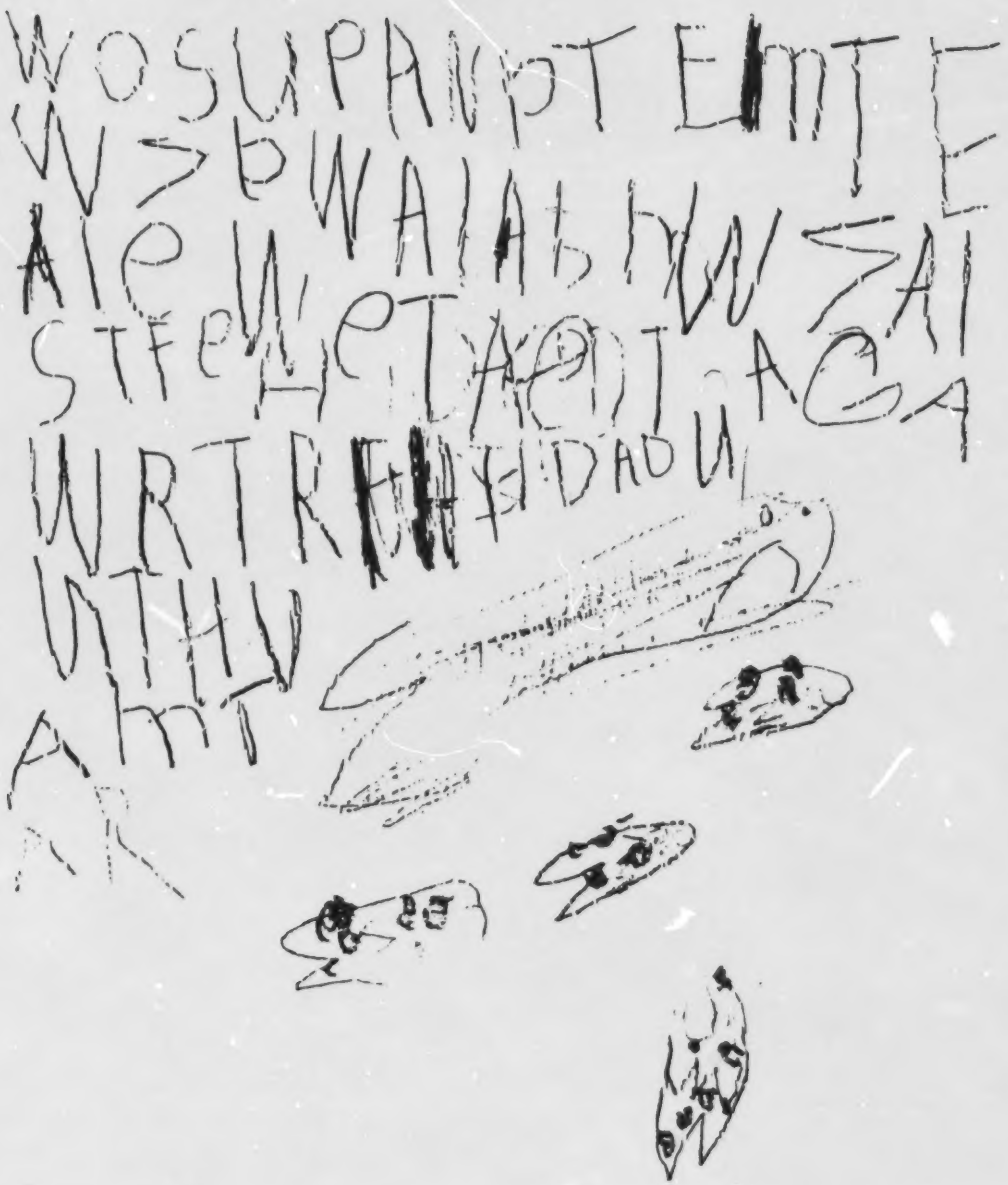


Figure 12: Invented Spellings
Subject: C1
"Once upon a time there was a whale. He was alone without any fish. Then there were two fish. He was without a dad and he didn't have a mother."

Figure 13: Invented Spellings
Subject: C1
"My sister and me like to look at Orion and Sirius and Taurus the Bull and the seven sisters."

Table 10

Analysis of Conventions
Mechanics/Skills Classroom

Categories	Data Collection Session				
	1	2	3	4	5
1. Scribbling					
2. Differentiation between drawing and writing	M1,M2 M3,M4 M5,M6 M7,M8 M9	M1,M2 M3,M4 M5,M6 M7,M8 M9	M1,M2 M3,M4 M5,M6 M7,M8 M9	M1,M2 M3,M4 M5,M6 M7,M8 M9	M1,M2 M3,M4 M5,M6 M7,M8 M9
3. Letters/Letter Forms	M1,M2 M3,M4 M5,M6 M7,M8 M9	M1,M2 M3,M4 M5,M6 M7,M8, M9	M1,M2 M3,M4 M5,M6 M7,M8 M9	M1,M2 M3,M4 M5,M6 M7,M8 M9	M1,M2 M3,M4 M5,M6 M7,M8 M9
4. Writing known isolated words other than own name	M1,M2 M4,M6 M8	M1,M2 M4,M6	M1,M2 M3,M4 M6,M8	M1,M2 M4,M5 M6	M1,M2 M3,M4 M5,M6 M7,M8 M9
5. Copying		M1,M2 M8,M9	M5	M4,M8	
6. Writing simple sentences	M2	(M2)	M1,M2 M4,(M5) M6	(M4),M5 M6,(M8)	M1,M2 M5
7. Combining two or more sentences	M2	(M2)	M2,M4	M1,M2 (M4)	M2

Categories	Data Collection Session				
	1	2	3	4	5
8. Control of punctuation			M2, (M5)	(M4)	
9. Forms of disclosure					
a. story			M1, M2	M1, M2 (M4)	
b. statement		(M2)	M4, M6 (M5)	M5, M6 (M8)	M1, M2 M5
c. letters	M1, M2				M1
d. list	M3, M4 M5, M6 M8	(M1), M3 M4, M5 M6, (M8) (M9)	M3, M8	M3	M3, M4 M6, M7 M8, M9 M9

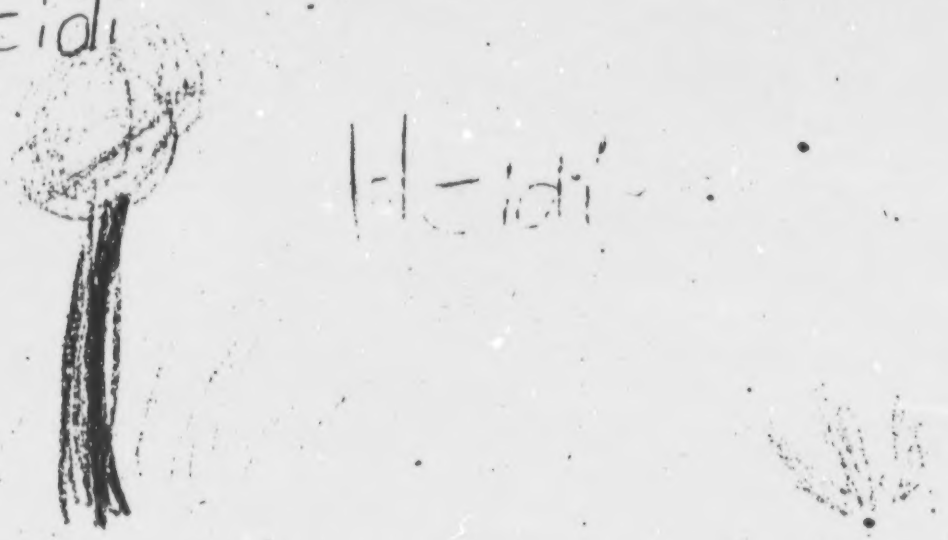
O = Copied Material

Categories	Data Collection Session				
	1	2	3	4	5
c. letter d. list	C1,C2 C3,C4 C5				C2,C6

Figure 14: Isolated Words
Subject: M1

Figure 15: Copied Material
Subject: M4

early one bright morning a Small fuzzy
duckling went for a walk. in the long Striped
Shadows that the cattails made He met
two frisky Colts. "Hello" Said the duckling.
Will You come for a walk Walk me?
Heidi



The most prevelant form of discourse in these subjects' writings was the list followed by the composing of statements. Only three children constructed selections which could be classified as stories in nature.

The children in the communication/whole-language classroom also incorporated a variety of conventions when constructing written language. Two students regularly used scribbles in their productions while seven clearly differentiated between drawing and writing. All children used letters or letter-like forms when requested to write. None of the children were observed to copy material when presented an opportunity to construct written language. Six of the nine subjects included known isolated words in their productions. The most often used form of discourse in this classroom was labels/statements followed by the use of lists.

The children in these two kindergarten classrooms demonstrated a wide range of knowledge about and facility with written language. Some of the children could express a purpose for writing and articulate a difference between drawing and writing; others could not. Writing patterns ranged from scribbles, alternative scripts and pictures to the consistent use of invented spellings and conventional graphic representations when attempting to communicate meaning. These children used several writing conventions indicating an understanding that the function of text determines the appropriate format to be used.

SUMMARY

Teachers' Influence On Children's Developing Concept Of Written Language

Children in the communication/whole language classroom wrote more and longer products than did the children in the mechanics/skills classroom. More importantly, children in the communication/whole-language classroom were allowed to choose their own topics; thus, conveying the notion that sharing a message was the goal for writing.

Generally, the children in the mechanics/skills classroom wrote fewer, shorter pieces, many of which were copied from other sources. Children in this classroom seldom, if ever, choose their own writing topics. Rather, the teacher selected what was to be written about or choose letters and words to trace or copy because of their graphic features, not because of the message they conveyed. Limited choice was exercised at certain times. The teacher selected between seven and nine pictures or books that were made available for use as stimulus patterns for writing. The children could select a specific item from this pre-selected group.

The processes used by children while writing were influenced by the instructional behaviors of the teacher.

Students in the mechanics/skills classroom generally listened to teacher instruction about letter shapes and sounds and direction for content. The children have learned the process of how to write graphically conventional letters and words.

Subjects in the communication/whole-language classroom, however, learned different writing processes altogether. These children have learned to write their message the best they can with some assistance from others if necessary, re-read what was written to themselves, and share the message of their completed product with others. The primary focus of their written language events was meaning - in the sharing of a message.

Another important factor regarding the teachers' influence was the range of developmental differences of the children's writing processes. Children in the mechanics/skills classroom were less different in terms of their writing products than were children in the communication/while-language classroom. The teacher's theoretical position in the mechanics/skills classroom appeared to restrict the range of writing processes used by the students. In the communication/whole-language classroom, however, the range of writing behaviors accepted and encouraged was much greater.

SIGNIFICANT FINDINGS

1. The primary influence on the development of a concept of written language in school was the classroom teacher.
2. Classroom practices of both teachers were consistent with their stated beliefs about literacy development.
3. The communication/whole-language classroom contained over three times as much literacy stimuli as the mechanics/skills classroom.
4. Relationships between teachers and students in the communication/whole-language classroom were transactional in nature while those in the mechanics/skills classroom were teacher controlled.
5. Children in communication/whole-language classrooms received more invitations to participate in literacy events and more time to do so than did children in a mechanics/skills classroom.
6. Children in the communication/whole-language classroom wrote more and longer pieces than did children in a mechanics/skills classroom.
7. Students under the guidance of a communication/whole-language teacher were allowed to choose their own topics more often than were children in mechanics/skills classrooms.
8. While children in both classrooms experienced difficulty explaining how writing and drawing differ they clearly showed the difference in their written language products.

9. Children in the mechanics/skills classroom used copying material from adult sources as a writing strategy while children in the communication/whole-language classroom did not.

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BIBLIOGRAPHY

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

Analysis Guidelines

1. The Survey of Displayed Literacy Stimuli: An Adaptation
2. Analysis of Conventions
3. Analysis of Writing Patterns
4. Analysis of Letter Forms to Depict Meaning

THE SURVEY OF DISPLAYED LITERACY STIMULI

Loughlin/Cole
January, 1984

Each item must be clearly visible, and within child's eye level/range.

CATEGORY DEFINITIONS

1. messages about the current day : schedules, assignments, notices, groupings, news, announcements needed to work through the day. These are clearly related to events on the day of survey.

2. current child written or dictated messages, labels, stories : less than five days old! Determined by dated material, or by asking. Exclude: groups of completed assignments displayed together.

3. print or writing segments related to nearby materials, objects, pictures : these are placed close to pictures or other materials, with the contents of the print or writing clearly related to those materials in some way. Exclude: labels, also children's illustrated stories, except when they are also related to other nearby materials.

4. books related to nearby materials, objects, pictures : books, located in combination with other materials, objects, or pictures, and whose contents are clearly related to those materials in some way.

5. different kinds of books : the number of different kinds of books available for children's choice, and clearly visible (i.e., trade, reference, child-made, etc.). Do not count total volumes in the area.

6. different kinds of recording tools : the number of different kinds of tools for children's use in recording events, ideas, information (i.e., pencil, crayon, tape recorder, chalk.). Do not count duplicates in any area.

7. different kinds of recording materials : the number of different kinds of materials for children to record upon (i.e., audio tape, stationery, chart paper, chalkboard, drawing paper). Do not count duplicates in any area.

8. different references : lists, pictures, charts, or other information sources children will use as references to help with ongoing activities. A set of references (i.e., encyclopedia) stored together is counted as one reference. Single volumes, placed in other locations, are counted. Do not count duplicates in any area.

9. displayed directions for activities : displayed task cards or charts that give directions for activities or procedures that children can carry out independently.

10. sign-up, sign-out charts or sheets : any teacher-prepared chart or sheet, clearly displayed, that calls for children to record information in print or symbol, or to sign names.

11. community culture/language books or print segments: books and print segments in children's home language, or reflecting home culture, in a fairly homogeneous linguistic/cultural community.

12. presence of empty display space: empty space in the area, where children may post their own work.

13. presence of display tools: tacks, tape, label blanks, and/or other tools children can use to display materials.

14. presence of functional labels: there are working labels on holders, cabinets, or equipment that give information about contents, use, or procedures.

15. presence of books with cover or page displayed: books in the area with covers clearly visible, or displayed opened to a particular page.

16. presence of displayed handwritten or print segments, clear and legible: print and/or children's or teacher's handwritten material, displayed on unpatterned background, with empty space surrounding the segment. Print or writing is large enough to be seen/read by children in the environment.

THE SURVEY OF DISPLAYED LITERACY STIMULI

Loughlin/Cole
University of New Mexico
January 1984

Each counted item must be clearly visible, and within child's eye level/range. Definitions attached.

DISPLAYED LITERACY STIMULI

1. messages about the current day

2. current child written or dictated messages, labels, stories

3. print or writing segments related to nearby materials, objects, pictures

4. books related to nearby materials, objects, or pictures

5. different kinds of books

6. different kinds of recording tools

7. different kinds of recording materials

8. different references

9. displayed directions for activity

10. sign-up, sign-out charts or sheets

11. community culture/ language books or print segments

12. presence of empty display space

13. presence of display tools

14. presence of functional labels

15. presence of books with cover or page displayed

16. presence of displayed handwritten or machine print segments, clear and legible

TOTAL PER AREA

Date_____ Special Conditions_____

Number of Areas Surveyed_____ Counted Item Total _____

Overall Total _____ Classroom and Grade Level_____

Observer_____

Use of Letter Forms to Depict Meaning
(McCully, 1982)

1. Letter denotes meaning
2. Letter represents one word
3. Sequence of letters represents meaning
4. Letter denotes phoneme
5. Letter represents syllable
6. Matching letter names to sound
7. Letters approximate standard spelling
8. Vowel Substitution
9. Spells short vowels correctly
10. Conventional graphic representations other than own name

Analysis of Writing Patterns
(McCully, 1982)

1. Nonstandard Print
   a. scribbles
   b. alternative scripts
   c. pictures
2. Standard Print
   a. random letters
   b. random numerals
   c. organized letter sequences
   d. invented spelling
   e. conventional graphic representations other than own name

Analysis of Conventions
(DeFord, 1980)

1. Scribbling
2. Differentiation between drawing and writing
3. Concepts of linearity, uniformity, inner complexity, symmetry, placement, left-to-right motion, and top-to-bottom directionality.
4. Development of letters and letter-like shapes
5. Combination of letters, possibly with spaces, indicating understanding of units (letters, words sentences), but may not show letter/sound correspondence
6. Writing known isolated words--developing sound/letter correspondence
7. Writing simple sentences with use of invented spellings
8. Combining two or more sentences to express complete thoughts
9. Control of punctuation--periods, capitalization, use of upper and lower case letters
10. Form of discourse--stories, information material, letters, etc.

APPENDIX B
QUESTIONNAIRE AND INTERVIEWS

1. The DeFord Theoretical Orientation to Reading Profile
2. Perceptions of Literacy Development: A Teacher Interview
3. Writing Interview
4. Preschool Children's Concept of Writing

The DeFord
THEORETICAL ORIENTATION TO READING
PROFILE (TORP) -3/78

Name_____

Directions: Read the following statements, and circle one of the responses that will indicate the relationship of the statement to your feelings about reading and reading instruction.
SA 2 3 4 SD (select one best answer that reflects the strength of agreement or disagreement)

1.	A child needs to be able to verbalize the rules of phonics in order to assure proficiency in processing new words.	1 2 3 4 5 SA SD
2.	An increase in reading errors is usually related to a decrease in comprehension.	1 2 3 4 5 SA SD
3.	Dividing words into syllables according to rules is a helpful instructional practice for reading new words.	1 2 3 4 5 SA SD
4.	Fluency and expression are necessary components of reading that indicate good comprehension.	1 2 3 4 5 SA SD
5.	Materials for early reading should be written in natural language without concern for short, simple words and sentences.	1 2 3 4 5 SA SD
6.	When children do not know a word, they should be instructed to sound out its parts.	1 2 3 4 5 SA SD
7.	It is a good practice to allow children to edit what is written into their own dialect when learning to read.	1 2 3 4 5 SA SD
8.	The use of a glossary or dictionary is necessary in determining the meaning and pronunciation of new words.	1 2 3 4 5 SA SD
9.	Reversals (e.g., saying "saw" for "was") are significant problems in the teaching of reading.	1 2 3 4 5 SA SD

10. It is a good practice to correct a child as soon as an oral reading mistake is made.

1 2 3 4 5
SA SD

11. It is important for a word to be repeated a number of times after it has been introduced to insure that it will become a part of sight vocabulary.

1 2 3 4 5
SA SD

12. Paying close attention to punctuation marks is necessary to understanding story content.

1 2 3 4 5
SA SD

13. It is a sign of an ineffective reader when words and phrases are repeated.

1 2 3 4 5
SA SD

14. Being able to label words according to grammatical function (nouns, etc.) is useful in proficient reading.

1 2 3 4 5
SA SD

15. When coming to a word that's unknown, the reader should be encouraged to guess based upon meaning and go on.

1 2 3 4 5
SA SD

16. Young readers need to be introduced to the root form of words (run, long) before they are asked to read inflected forms (running, longest).

1 2 3 4 5
SA SD

17. It is not necessary for a child to know the letters of the alphabet in order to learn to read.

1 2 3 4 5
SA SD

18. Flashcard drill with sightwords is an unnecessary form of practice in reading instruction.

1 2 3 4 5
SA SD

19. Ability to use accent patterns in multisyllable words (pho'to graph, photo'graphy, and pho to gra'phic) should be developed as a part of reading instruction.

1 2 3 4 5
SA SD

20. Controlling text through consistent spelling patterns (The fat cat ran back. The fat cat sat on a hat) is a means by which children can best learn to read.

1 2 3 4 5
SA SD

21. Formal instruction in reading is necessary to insure the adequate development of all the skills used in reading.

1 2 3 4 5
SA SD

22. Phonic analysis is the most important form of analysis used when meeting new words.

1 2 3 4 5
SA SD

23. Children's initial encounters with print should focus on meaning, not upon exact graphic representation.

1 2 3 4 5
SA SD

24. Word shapes (word configuration, big) should be taught in reading to aid in word recognition.

1 2 3 4 5
SA SD

25. It is important to teach skills in relation to other skills.

1 2 3 4 5
SA SD

26. If a child says "house" for the written word "home," the response should be left uncorrected.

1 2 3 4 5
SA SD

27. It is not necessary to introduce new words before they appear in the reading text.

1 2 3 4 5
SA SD

28. Some problems in reading are caused by readers dropping the inflectional endings from words (e.g., jumps, jumped)

1 2 3 4 5
SA SD

Perceptions of Literacy Development: A Teacher Interview (McCully, 1981). An Adaption of Parent Conceptions of Language Development: An Oral Interview (Burke, Hill & Harste, 1981)

1. How can you tell when a student begins to read?

2. What student do you know who is a good reader?_____
   What do you think makes that student a good reader?

3. How can you tell when a student begins to write?

4. What student do you know who is a good writer?_____
   What do you think makes that student a good writer?

5. Are your students good readers?

   How do you know?

6. Are your students good writers?

   How do you know?

7. What are some of the experiences and opportunities that your students have that you feel support the development of reading and writing?

8. What would you like your students to do better as readers?

9. What would you like your students to be able to do better as writers?

10. What questions about your role in your students' development of reading and writing might you like to raise with an expert?

11. Do you have any favorite stories about your students' language use which you could share?

12. When you are writing and you come to something you don't know how to write, what do you do?

    Do you ever do anything else?

13. Who is a good writer that you know?

14. What makes him/her a good writer?

15. Do you think he/she ever comes to something he/she doesn't know how to write?

16. When he/she comes to something he/she doesn't know how to write, what do you think he/she does about it?

17. If you knew that someone was having difficulty writing how would you help that person?

18. What do you like most of all to write?

19. Do you think that you are a good writer? Why or why not?

20. How did you learn to write?

21. What opportunities do your students have to observe you write?

22. Do you write to your students?

    What do you write?

    Why do you write?

23. What do you write routinely?

Writing Interview--An Adaptation of the Burke Interview of Reading (McCully, 1981)

Name_____ Age_____ Date_____

Sex_____ Name of interviewer_____

1. When you are writing and you come to something you don't know how to write, what do you do?

   Do you ever do anything else?

2. Who is a good writer that you know?

3. What makes him/her a good writer?

4. Do you think he/she ever comes to something he/she doesn't know how to write?

5. When he/she does come to something he/she doesn't know how to write, what do you think he/she does about it?

   OR

   Suppose that he/she does come to something that he/she doesn't know how to write. What do you think he/she would do about it?

6. If you knew that someone was having difficulty writing how would you help that person?

7. What would a teacher do to help that person?

8. How did you learn to write?

9. Do you think you are a good writer?

Pre-School Children's Concepts of Writing (Goodman & Cox, 1976)

Name of child:_____ Date:_____

Age of child (years & months):_____ Sex: _____

Name of interviewer:_____

(Please use a cassette tape recorder for the interview if possible)

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1. Write for me (Have available lined paper, unlined paper, pencil, pen, magic marker, and crayon in front of child). If child says "no", say write your name for me.

2. Read me what you wrote.

3. Tell me about what you wrote. What's this and this? (Get at terms word, letter, etc.)

4. Write me a letter.

5. Do you write at home or school?

6. What do you write?

7. Why do people write?

8. Draw me a picture.

9. Is drawing like writing?

   How?

   Or why not?

10. If the child can't write his/her own name then write three different looking names including the child's and ask him to read his name.